

SOLEMN PLEADINGS FOR REVIVAL

NO. 1215

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 3, 1875,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Keep silence before Me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.”
Isaiah 41:1.*

THE text is a challenge to the heathen to enter into a debate with the living God. The Lord bids them argue at their best and let the controversy be calmly carried out to its issues, so as to be decided once and for all. He bids them be quiet, reflect, and consider, in order that with renewed strength they may come into the discussion and defend their gods if they can. He urges them not to bring flippant arguments, but such as have cost them thought and have weight in them, if such arguments can be. He bids them be quiet till they are prepared to speak and then, when they can produce their strong reasons and set their cause in the best possible light, He challenges them to enter the lists and see if they can maintain, for a moment, that their gods are gods, or anything better than deceit and falsehood.

I am not about to speak of that controversy at this time, but to use the text with quite another view. We, also, who worship the Lord God Most High, have a controversy with *Him*. We have not seen His church and His cause prospering in the world for many a day as we would desire. As yet heathenism is not put to the rout by Christianity; neither does the truth everywhere trample down error. Nations are not born in a day, nor have the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. We desire to reason with God about this and He, Himself, instructs us how to prepare for this sacred debate.

He bids us be silent. He bids us consider and then draw near to Him with holy boldness and plead with Him. He bids us produce our cause and bring forth our strong reasons. It seems to me that at the beginning of the year, I cannot suggest to Christian people a more urgent topic than this, that we should plead with God that He would display among us greater works of grace than as yet our eyes have seen. We have read of wonderful revivals. History records the prodigies of the Reformation and the marvelous way in which the gospel was spread during the first two centuries. We pine to see the same, again, or to know the reason why it is not so—and with holy boldness it is our desire to come before the Lord and plead with Him—as a man pleads with his friend. May God help us to do so in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I. First, then, LET US BE SILENT. “Keep silence before me, O islands.” Before the controversy opens, let us be silent with solemn awe, for we have to speak with the Lord God Almighty! Let us not open our mouths to impugn His wisdom, nor allow our hearts to question His love. What if things do not look as bright as we would wish? The Lord reigns! And what if He seems to delay? Is He not the Lord God with whom a thousand years are as one day, and who is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness? We are going to be bold to speak with Him, but still, He is the eternal God and we are dust and ashes. Whatever we may say with holy boldness, we would not utter a word in rash familiarity. He is our Father, but He is our Father in heaven. He is our Friend, but at the same time, He is our Judge. We know that whatever He does is best. We would not say unto our Maker, “What have You made?” Nor to our Creator, “What have You done?” Shall the potter give account to the clay for the works of his hands? “It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him.” When we look at what He does, it may seem to our dim apprehension to be exceedingly strange, and we may fail to read its meaning. But we need not wish to read it. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing and if He chooses to conceal it, let it be concealed! Truly, God is good to Israel and His mercy endures forever! If this world's

history is to drag on through another score of mournful centuries, it will only reveal so much the more matter for praise when the great hallelujahs of the ultimate victory shall peal forth.

Our silence of awe should deepen into that of *shame*, for, my brethren, though it is certainly true that the cause of God has not prospered, whose fault is this? If there has been straitening, it has not been in God. Where, then, has it been? If the seed has rotted under the clods, or if the cankerworm has eaten the green shoot so that the reaper has not joyfully filled his arm, from where does it come? Has there not been sin among us, yes, sin in the church of God? What if Israel has turned her back in the day of battle? Is there not an accursed thing in the camp and an Achan who has hidden away the goodly Babylonian garment and the shekel of gold? God says, "Is there not a cause? Can two walk together, except they be agreed? If you walk contrary to Me, I also will walk contrary to you." Truly, when I see how God has blessed us, I am not so much astonished that He has not given more as I am amazed that He has given so much! Does He bless such unworthy instruments, such laggards, such slothful workers? Does He do anything by tools so unfit? Does He place any treasure in vessels so impure? This is to be ascribed to His grace. But if He does not use us to the highest point, let us take shame and confusion of face to ourselves—and before the throne of His glory let us sit down in silence. What, indeed, can we say? We have no charges, no accusations to bring against the Most High, but we must silently confess that we, ourselves, are vile. Unto us belongs shame and confusion of face.

Go further than this and keep the silence of *consideration*. This is a noisy age and the church of Christ, herself, is too noisy. I fear we have very little *silent* worship. I do not so much regret the absence of silence from the public assembly as from our private devotions, where it has a sacred hallowing influence, unspeakably valuable. Let us be silent, now, for a minute, and consider what is it that we desire of the Lord: the conversion of thousands; the overthrow of error; the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom. Think in your minds what the blessings are which your soul pants after. Get a correct idea of them and then inquire whether you are prepared to receive them. Suppose they were to be now bestowed? Are you ready? If thousands of converts were to be born unto this one church, are you prepared to teach them, instruct them, and comfort them? Are you doing it now, you Christian people? Are you acting in such a way that God knows you to be fit to have the charge of those converts that you are asking for? You pray for divine grace—are you using the grace you have? You want to see more power—how about the power you have? Are you employing it? If a mighty wave of revival sweeps over London, are your hearts ready? Are your hands ready? Are your purses ready? Are you altogether ready to be carried along on the crest of that blessed wave? Consider. If you reflect, you will see that God is able to give His church the largest blessing and to give it at any time! Keep silence and consider, and you will see that He can give the blessing by you or by me—He can make any one of us, weak as we are—mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds! He can make our feeble hands, though we have but a few loaves and fishes, capable of feeding myriads with the bread of life. Consider this, and this morning ask yourselves, in the quiet of your spirits, what can we do to get the blessing? Are we doing that? What is there in our temper, in our private prayer, in our acts for God which would be likely to bring down the blessing? Do we act as if we were sincere? Have we *really* a desire for these things which we say we desire? Could we give up worldly engagements to attend to the work of God? Could we spare time to look after the Lord's vineyard? Are we willing to do the Lord's work and are we in the state of heart in which we can do it efficiently and acceptably? Keep silence and consider. I would suggest to every Christian that he should sit a while before God, when he reaches his home, and worship with the silence of awe, with the silence of shame—and then with the silence of careful thought concerning these things.

Then we shall pass on to the silence of *attention*. "Keep silence before Me, O islands." Keep silence that God may speak to you. That God's Word may be heard in your soul, not only *parts* of it, but all of it! That God's Spirit may be heard with His gentle monitions warning you—with His blessed enlightenments revealing to you, yourself and your Lord—with His divine promptings urging you to greater consecration and superior holiness. And with His divine assistances, leading you onward in the path of a higher life than you have yet attained. O, it is well to sit still before the Lord, deaf to every voice but the divine! We cannot expect Him to hear us if we will not hear Him. "I will hear," says the prophet, "what God the Lord will speak." Do *you* always do so? If you have heard the Lord speak to you, you will ad-

mit that there is no voice like His. Be silent till you hear the Lord's Word slaying all your pride and self-will and self-seeking and proclaiming His sole glory in every part of your manhood.

If you have learned attention, be silent with *submission*. For this you will need the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit. It is not easy to attain to full submission of soul to whatever the Lord wills. We are often like hard brass which will not take the impression from the seal. If we were what we should be, we should be as melted wax which at once takes the stamp that is put upon it. O, to have a heart that is quite silent as to any wish or will, or opinion, or judgment of our own, so that God's mind shall be *our* mind, God's will shall be *our* will! The church would soon be healed of her sorrows and delivered from her divisions if she would, for a while, be silent. But the voice of a favorite teacher is heard by some, and the voice of another master in Israel is listened to by others—and so God's voice is lost amid the clamor of sects and the uproar of parties. O, that the church would sit at Jesus' feet, lay aside her prejudices and take the Word in its simplicity and integrity—and accept what God the Lord, and He only, does declare to be the truth! I invite the members of this church and urge the members of all churches to see to this. See to it that we cry unto the Lord for a blessed silence in His presence till we sit, like servants, waiting for their Master's word, and stand like watchmen waiting for the Master's coming—ourselves quiet, restful, peaceful, resigned—no, acquiescing in the divine will, all attentive to hear each word that falls from Him and resolved with humble resolution that whatever the Lord shall speak, that will we do. We will accent His Word as law, light, and life to our souls and nothing else! May the Lord send that solemn silence over all His people now!

II. In that silence, LET US RENEW OUR STRENGTH. Noise wears us out. Silence feeds us. To run upon the Master's errands is always well. But to sit at the Master's feet is quite as necessary, for like the angels which excel in strength, our power to do His commandments arises out of our hearkening to the voice of His Word. If even for a human controversy, quiet thought is a fit preparation, how much more is it necessary in solemn pleadings with the Eternal One? Now, let the deep springs be unsealed! Let the solemnities of eternity exercise their power while all is still within us.

But how does it happen that such silence renews our strength? It does so, first, by *giving space for the strengthening Word to come into the soul and the energy of the Holy Spirit to be really felt*. Words, words, words! We have so many words and they are but chaff! But where is THE WORD that in the beginning was God and was with God? That Word is the living and incorruptible Seed! "What is the chaff to the wheat? says the Lord." We need less of the words of man and more of Him who is the very Word of God! Be quiet, be quiet, and let Jesus speak! Let His wounds speak to you. Let His death speak to you. Let His resurrection speak to you. Let His ascension and His subsequent glory speak to you. And let the trumpet of His Second Advent ring in your ears. You cannot hear the music of these glorious things for the rattle of the wheels of care and the vain jangle of disputatious self-wisdom. Be silent, that you may hear the voice of Jesus, for when He speaks, you will renew your strength. The eternal Spirit is with His people, but we often miss His power because we give more ear to other voices than to His, and quite as often, our own voice is an injury to us, for it is heard when we have received no message from the Lord and therefore, gives an uncertain sound. If we will wait upon the blessed Spirit, His mysterious influence will sway us most divinely, and we shall be filled with all the fullness of God. Even as we have seen the frost yield suddenly to the influence of the warm south wind, so shall our lethargy melt before His sovereign energy. How often have I felt, in a moment, my ice-locked spirit yield to the breath of the Holy Spirit! You have seen a cloud on high flying, as you thought, against the wind, driven on by some upper current of air which you did not feel below. Even thus have we been carried on by upper currents which flesh and blood cannot understand. We sang as Dr. Watts does—

*"Look how we grovel here below,
Fond of these trifling toys.
Our souls can neither fly nor go
To reach eternal joys."*

But when the Holy Spirit came, the lightning, itself, could not overtake us! We rode upon a cherub and did fly. Yes, we did ride upon the wings of the wind, for God, the Everlasting One, had caught us up and filled us with His power! Be silent, then, that the Spirit may thus work upon you. Let other spirits be

gone—let the spirit of the world, and the spirit of the flesh, and the spirit of self be banished—and let the Spirit of the Ever Blessed be heard speaking in your soul. Thus shall you renew your strength.

We must be silent to renew our strength, next, by *using silence for consideration as to who it is that we are dealing with*. We are going to speak with God about the weakness of His church and the slowness of its progress. Be silent, that you may remember who He is with whom you are expostulating. It is God the omnipotent, who can make His church mighty if He will and that at once! We are coming to plead, now, with One whose arm is not shortened, and whose ear is not heavy. Renew your strength as you think of Him! If you have doubted the ultimate success of Christianity, renew your strength as you remember who it is that has sworn by Himself that surely all flesh shall see the salvation of God! You are coming to plead with Jesus Christ! Be silent and remember those wounds of His with which He has redeemed mankind! Can these fail of their reward? Shall Jesus be robbed of the power He has so dearly earned? The earth is the Lord's and He will unsheathe her of the mists which dimmed her luster at the fall. He will make this planet shine as brightly as when she first was rolled from between the palms of the omnipotent Creator. There shall be a new heaven and a new earth in which dwells righteousness! Think of that, and renew your strength. Has not the Lord said, concerning His beloved Son, that He shall divide the spoil with the strong, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands? Shall it not be so?

Think, too that you are about to appeal to the Holy Spirit and there, again, you have the same divine attributes. What cannot the Spirit of God do? He sent the tongues of fire at Pentecost and Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and men of every nation heard the gospel at once! He turned 3,000 hearts by one sermon to know the crucified Savior to be the Messiah. He sent the apostles like flames of fire through the whole earth, till every nation felt their power. He can do the same again! He can bring the church out of darkness into noonday! Let us renew our strength as we think of this. The work we are going to plead about is not ours one-half so much as it is God's! It is not in our hands, but in hands that cannot fail! Therefore, let us renew our strength as we silently meditate upon the Triune Jehovah with whom we have to speak.

In silence, too, let us renew our strength by *remembering His promises*. We want to see the world converted to God and He has said, "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it." "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust." "The idols He shall utterly abolish." There are a thousand promises! Let us think of that and however difficult the enterprise may be, and however dark our present prospects, we shall not dare to doubt when Jehovah has spoken and pledged His Word!

Our strength will be renewed, next, if in silence we *yield up to God all our own wisdom and strength*. Brethren, I never am so full as when I am empty. I have never been as strong as in the extremity of weakness. The source of our worst weakness is our strength and the source of our worst folly is our personal wisdom. Lord, help us to be still till we have given up ourselves, till we have said, "Lord, our ways of working cannot be compared with Your ways of working. Teach us how to work! Lord, our judgments are weak compared with Your perfect judgment. We are fools—be You our teacher and guide in all things. Crush out of us our fancied strength and make us like worms, for it is the worm Jacob that You will make into the new sharp threshing instrument which shall thresh the mountain!" After this sort shall you renew your strength.

Keep silence, then, you saints, till you have felt your folly and your weakness—and then renew your strength most gloriously by *casting yourselves upon the strength of God*. More than ever before, let your inmost souls be filled with trust in the arm that never fails, the hand that never loses its cunning, the eyes that are never closed, and the heart that never wavers. Jehovah works everywhere and all things are His servants. He works in the light and we see His glory. But He equally works in the darkness, where we cannot perceive Him. His wisdom is too profound to be at all times understood of mortal men. Let us be patient and wait His time, for as surely as God lives, the idols must go down, the crescent of Mohammed must die forever, and the harlot of the seven hills must be devoured with fire—the Lord has said it—and so it must be! Jehovah has declared it, and who shall say He is a liar? With no more doubt of our Father's power than the child at its mother's breast has of its mother's love—with no more doubt than an

angel before the throne can have of Jehovah's majesty—let us commit ourselves, each one after his own fashion, to suffering and to labor for the grand cause of God, feeling well assured that neither labor nor suffering can be in vain in the Lord!

Thus much, then, concerning the renewing of our strength. I wish we could have had a quarter of an hour's silence that you might reflect upon these topics, but I leave them with you, trusting that you will seek that silence at home and so renew your strength.

III. Our text proceeds to add, "Then let them draw near." Beloved, you that know the Lord, I would urge you to DRAW NEAR. You are silent. You have renewed your strength. Now enjoy access with boldness! The condition in which to intercede for others is not that of distance from God, but that of great nearness to Him. Even thus did Abraham draw near when he pleaded for Sodom and Gomorrah. May God the Holy Spirit draw us near, even now. Perhaps the following five considerations may help us in so doing.

Let us remember *how near we really are*. We have been washed from every sin in the precious blood of Jesus. We are covered from head to foot, at this moment, with the spotless righteousness of Immanuel, God with us! We are accepted in the Beloved! Yes, we are, at this moment, one with Christ and members of His body. How could we be nearer? How near is Christ to God? So near are we! Come near, then, in your personal pleadings, for you are near in your covenant Representative. The Lord Jesus has taken manhood into union with the divine nature and now, between God and man, there exists a special and unparalleled relationship, the likes of which the universe cannot present. No actual blood relationship exists between God and any other creature but man, "For verily He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham." "Unto which of the angels said He at any time, You are My Son; this day have I begotten You"? And yet has He said this first and chiefly to the Lord Jesus Christ! And next, in a true but secondary sense, to each regenerate one whom He has, of His own will, begotten by the Word of truth! Come near, then, O you sons of God, come near, for you *are* near! Stand where your sonship places you, where your Representative stands on your behalf. Let the slaves of the flesh and the bond-servants of the law stand afar off from the Lord who speaks to them from Sinai. But as for us, it is our joy to come very near, for the voice of love calls to us from Calvary!

The next consideration which may help you to draw near is that *you are coming to a Father*. That was a blessed word of our Lord's, "The Father Himself loves you." God forbid I should say a word to make you think less of the splendor and majesty of God! But I pray you remember that, however great and terrible He is, He is our Father! I delight in those words of our poet—

*"The God that rules on high,
And thunders when He please,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas—
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love."*

As surely as my earthly father is near akin to me and I may come to him with loving familiarity, so may I approach the Lord who has begotten me again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! And I may say to Him, "Abba," "Father," and He will not disregard the cry. Has He not given us the spirit of adoption? How can He despise that which He gives? Come, then, and speak in your Father's ear. O child of God, you are not talking to a stranger! You are not about to hold a debate with an enemy! You are not seeking to wring a blessing from an unwilling hand! It is to your *Father* that you speak! Come near to Him, I pray you, and plead this day!

Remember next, that *the desire which is in our heart for God's glory and the extension of His church, is a desire written there by the Holy Spirit*. Now, if the Holy Spirit, Himself, incites the prayer, and He knows the mind of God, if He makes intercession in our hearts according to the will of God, we need have no hesitation to express our desires because our desires are simply the *shadow* of the eternal purpose! And that which always was in the mind of God to give, the Spirit of God has inclined us to ask! True prayer is the intimation of God to man that He intends to bless Him. It is the herald of mercy. Plead, then, O child of God, for the Spirit of God is pleading in you! Come and speak out that which He

speaks within. He Himself helps your infirmities, making intercession in you according to the will of God. When the Spirit prompts, what cause can there be for hesitation? We must speak when He inspires.

Remember next, *that what we ask*, if we are now about to plead with God concerning His kingdom, *is according to His own mind*. We are at one with God in this matter. If it were not for God's glory for sinners to be converted, we would not pray for it. We desire to see thousands of sinners turn to Christ, but it is with this view—that the infinite mercy, wisdom, power, and love of God may be manifested towards them—and so God may be praised. Verily, much as our heart is set upon the prosperity of the church of God, if it were conceivable that such prosperity would not glorify God we would not ask for it! We desire to see not *our* notions, but God's truth prevail! I do not want you to believe as I believe except so far as that belief is according to the mind of God. I pray every believer here to search his heart and see whether his desire is a pure one, having God's glory as its Alpha and Omega. It is God's truth, God's kingdom, God's glory that we want to see promoted! If this is the case, may we not come very boldly? We have not only the king's ear but His heart, also, and we may open our mouths wide. When we have a question as to the Lord's will, we are bound to go no further than, "Nevertheless, not as I will." But when there is no ground for hesitancy, with what sacred ardor may we press our suit!

Moreover, there is this further consideration—the *Lord loves to be pleaded with*. He might have given all the covenant blessings without prayer—why does He compel us to use entreaties unless it is that He loves to hear the voices of His children? God has given to the church untold mercies in answer to intercession, for He delights to bless His people at the Mercy Seat. In this, our own beloved church, prayer has been more glorious and excellent than all mountains of prey. Its bow has not returned empty, neither has its shield been cast away! Prayer has been bolder than the lion, swifter than the eagle, and has overthrown all her adversaries, treading them beneath her feet as straw is trod for the dunghill! To this day, we *live* by prayer! The church of God has never gained a victory, but in answer to prayer. Her whole history is to the praise of the glory of a prayer-hearing God! Come, then, brethren, if we have sped so well before, and if God invites us now, yes, if He *delights* in our petitions, let us not be slack, but enlarge our requests before Him. O, for grace that we may now, this day, and from now on, draw very near to God!

IV. I may need a few minutes over the allotted time this morning, while I now come to the fourth and last point, which is, "LET US SPEAK." Be silent, renew your strength, draw near, and then speak. What have we to say upon the matter which concerns us? Let us first speak in the spirit of *adoring gratitude*. How sweet to think that there should be a Savior at all! To think that the project of rescuing this poor world from her ruin should ever have been entertained in the courts of heaven! To think that the Spirit should be given to reside among men, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the rebels to obedience to the truth! To think that there should be a heavenly kingdom set up, as it is set up—that it should have made such advances as it has made, and should still grow mightily, is absolutely wonderful! That Jesus Christ should be seen of angels is put down as a wonder, but it is mentioned, next to it, that He was "believed on in the world." He has been believed on by millions, and however gloomy the prospects of the church may appear, the kingdom of Christ is not an insignificant kingdom, even now. Those who deride her laugh too soon. She is in her twilight, as Voltaire said, but it is the twilight of her morning, and not of her evening! Brighter times are coming. But even now, up to this moment, the history of the church cannot be told without adoring gratitude to God. She has been foolish and has lost her strength, but like Samson's, it will return. Deceived and deluded in the days of Constantine, she allowed baptized heathen to proclaim an adulterous connection between the church and the state—and from that day her glory has departed and her power has fled. When will she repent? The nominal church goes after her lovers, seeking her corn and her wine at their hands, and she says to kings and queens of the earth, "Be *you* my head, and let your senators rule me." While she does this God cannot and will not bless her in any great degree. When was the ark taken? Never till it was defended by the carnal sword! When did the ark triumph? Was it not when, left alone in its own glory, it smote Dagon to the ground? When the visible church gets back to her chastity to Christ, she will say, "We have nothing to do with parliaments and kings, except to convert them! Ours is a spiritual kingdom and statecraft is foreign to us. We ask not for your endowments! We care not for your persecutions. Let us alone—all we ask is a clear stage and no favor."

The bride of Christ comes not into the world to toy with the politics of princes—hers is a higher work. She leans upon the Lord, alone, and yields allegiance to none else. Remove worldliness and you will see bright days. The grand impediment of the church, now, is the arm of flesh—the lofty, high-sounding titles of her prelates, the palaces of her bishops—the priestliness of her ministers and the lack of gospel simplicity! Be amazed, you heavens, that the successors of the apostles should be owners of palaces! This hampers her, but cut the church clear of this, and God’s bare arm will soon win victory unto the truth in this land. I, for my part, bless and magnify the Lord that, though a great section of the visible church has played the harlot so sadly in the midst of the nations, yet He has not quite cast her away. He keeps a chosen company who follow the Lamb where ever He goes—on whose banner is written, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” And whose watchword is, “One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren.” As to the world, we will seek its conversion, but we will never enter into alliance with it, much less bow down our necks before its kings and princes! May God grant us grace, as we draw near to Him, to speak out in adoration of Him.

Next, let us speak in *humble expostulation*. I would earnestly urge my brethren in Christ to reason thus with the Lord. “O Lord, Your truth does not prosper in the land, yet You have said, ‘My word shall not return unto Me void.’ Lord, You are every day blasphemed, and yet You have said that Your glory shall be seen of all flesh. Lord, they set up idols, even in this land, where Your martyrs burned. They are setting up graven images again! Lord, tear them down, for Your name’s sake. For Your honor’s sake, we beseech You, do it! Do You not hear the enemy triumph? They say the gospel is worn out! They tell us that we are the relics of an antiquated race, that modern progress has swept the old faith away. “Will You have it so, good Lord? Shall the gospel be accounted a worn-out almanac and shall they set up their new gospels in its place? Souls are being lost, O God of mercy! Hell is being filled, O God of infinite compassion! Jesus sees but few brought to Himself and washed in His precious blood. Time is flying and every year increases the number of the lost! How long, O God, how long? Why do You tarry?” In this manner, order your case before the Lord and He will listen to you.

When you have spoken by way of reason, then turn to *pleading*. Plead with all your skill in argument. “There is Your promise, O Jehovah. Will You not keep it? You have said unto Your Son, Ask of Me, and I will give You the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession! “We ask in Jesus’ name! Do it for Your promise sake! Lord, You have done great things and unspeakable in times gone by! We have heard with our ears and our fathers have told us the wondrous things which You did in their days and in the old times before them. You are the same Lord, therefore, glorify Yourself again! By all the past, we beseech You, reveal Yourself at this present.” Plead with the Lord and lay stress upon His glory. Tell Him that it glorifies His mercy to save sinners, and glorifies His wisdom and His power, yes, every attribute of His divine nature. Then plead the merit of His Son. O, brethren, plead the blood! Plead the wounds! Plead the bloody sweat in Gethsemane! Plead the cross! Plead the death and resurrection! Come not away from the mercy seat till with this mighty plea you have won the victory!

I scarcely need remind you at how many points you may get a grip of the covenant angel, for when wrestling with Him, if you but have the will to do it, you may seize Him anywhere and hold Him fast, and say, “I will not let You go unless You bless me.” I wish I could preach like John Knox, but I wish 10 times more that I could *pray* like he did—a man who would not take, “No,” for an answer, but won Scotland for Christ—and she remains Christ’s still, through John Knox’s prayers! It is not possible for prelacy to flourish where Knox has prayed! Oh for prayer such as that, again! King of kings, will You not stretch out Your scepter and save men? Will You not pluck Your sword out of its scabbard and strike Your foes? There are some men to whom God would almost say, as He did to Moses, “Let Me alone.” They are favored to use such forcible arguments and valid pleas that wrath forbears and mercy yields the blessing. If we can push on as Moses did with renewed pleading and entreaties, the blessing will come! This is what England, yes, the *world*, needs—men who can plead with God—men who can draw near and then speak!

Again, dear brethren, after we have been silent, after we have renewed our strength, and after we have drawn near to God, let us speak, today, in the way of *dedication*. Now, here I cannot suggest to any man what he, in particular may speak. I charge you before the living God, do not lie to Him, but if you

can say this, I pray you say it—"I give to God this day my whole being, absolutely and forever—my body, my soul, my spirit. I have asked that His kingdom may come—I pledge myself, in His sight, to extend that kingdom by every power I possess or may be able to gain, by every opportunity He may put in my way—and by every means which I am able to use." I do not think Jesus ought to have less than that from us, but I know He gets far less. Perhaps the Lord may move some of you young men to say, "Lord, I want to see Your kingdom spread and therefore, I will give myself up to preach the gospel." Perhaps some of you good women here may say, "I will undertake a work of usefulness of some kind or other for Jesus. I am resolved I will." And you who have this world's goods, I hope you will say, "I know that this good work always needs money. By His grace, I have it—it shall be freely given. When I see that the gospel does not spread, I will not have the reflection on my mind that it is retarded by deficiency of pecuniary means while I have gold stored up." I will not suggest to any of you more than this—whatever the Lord moves you to do, do it! But I think when we come to plead with the Lord after this fashion we ought to be able to say, "Lord, spread Your kingdom. It is not my fault if it does not spread. I do for You all I can. I boast not of it, for all I do, I ought to do! I wish I could do a thousand times as much, but still, Lord, during this year of grace, I hope to do much for You which I may have forgotten until this time."

Last of all, brethren, let us speak, still, in the way of *confidence*. However we may complain of the spread of error, the deaths of good men, and the fewness of able ministers to take their places. However we may think the times to be dark and dreary, let us never speak as if God were dead. I walked, some time ago, with one of the most earnest Christians I know of, a very devout man, and he told me he was afraid one day the streets of London would run with blood. He was afraid of an educated democracy which, being uneducated in religion in school board schools, would become clever atheists and cast off all reverence for God and law. And he gave me an awful picture of what was going to happen. But I touched him on the arm and said, "There is one thing you have forgotten, dear friend—God is not yet dead. What you are dreading will never occur in this land, I am sure. We have an open Bible. We still have some who preach the gospel with all their hearts, and there is still a salt and leaven in the city of London that God will bless to keep down the rottenness and corruption. In spite of all His foes, the Lord reigns." What, my friends? The devil conquer our God? Never! Rome triumphant over Zion? Never! Rome has been very cunning. Satan has done his best in Roman Catholicism. There is no more wisdom left in the devil than he has put into that concern, and if that is confounded, he has lost all. That is his ultimatum—the course of hellish craft can go no further. He has staked all his power in the Church of Rome—and to a certainty, she will be driven before the church of Christ like chaff before the wind! They shall ask and say, "Where is this harlot city that made the nations drunk with the wine of her fornication? That rode upon the scarlet beast up and down upon the earth and had written upon her brow, 'Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots'?" Vain will it be to ask where she is, for they shall answer, "Did you not hear the splash of the millstone as the angel hurled it into the flood, and said, 'Thus terribly shall Babylon fall, and thus no more be found at all'?" Then shall go up the shout, "Hallelujah, Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns." Let us anticipate the hour! Even now, let every heart shout, "Hallelujah, Hallelujah," and yet again, let us say, "Hallelujah, the Lord reigns, and all must be well."

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